



Tari, Papua New Guinea

Building a culture of peace and justice in communities in need of conflict resolution.

About YAP Tari

YAP work in PNG is based in Tari in the Southern Highlands. Government services are often ineffective and the national government recently declared a "state of emergency" in the area. The local YAP coordinator has been organising peace workshops for the past seven years.

The Situation

For generations, the tribes of the Southern Highlands have lived as enemies, warring and looting as part of a vicious daily cycle of violence and retribution. During the last ten years particularly tribal warfare has disrupted normal life for the people in the highlands of PNG. There are many causes for the tribal conflict, the main ones being a breakdown of law and order, political issues, corruption, greed, "wantok" system (cultural obligations to friends and relatives) and payback/vengeance.

The Project

YAP Tari provides mediation and reconciliation programs to encourage local young people to take responsibility for peacemaking in their community. The programs train participants in conflict resolution. YAP negotiators also work with tribes on programs to sustain peace in communities. The workshops help people recognise the layers of fear and mistrust that

have blocked the communities' capacity to resolve conflict.

Achievements

In 2008 a historic event for all the people in Highlands of PNG took place as 32 warring tribes came together to sign permanent peace treaties. The historic signing came after decades of war and conflict in the region gave way to lengthy peace negotiations facilitated by YAP Tari. Under the treaty all 32 tribes will lay down weapons and compensate each other for property and lives destroyed during the conflict. This is a fantastic achievement given the levels of mistrust that once kept these communities at war.

The Future

The next step is to sustain the peace achieved by the tribes. After a long discussion with the tribal groups it was decided to organize a communal farm. The community has the land and the skills to enable its creation. YAP will provide the funds to buy seeds, garden tools and fertilizers to produce vegetables such as cabbages and carrots. This will ensure that peace will be sustained in the Southern Highlands and will allow for much needed development to take place.



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